Celebrating our Gallup Employee Satisfaction Scores

At SFA, we're working hard to put America through school and meet our three performance goals of improving customer satisfaction, reducing unit cost and improving employee satisfaction. Yesterday, we celebrated the latest scores on our Gallup employee satisfaction survey at our second All Hands meeting of the year.

In just five months, SFA's overall average score went from a 3.5 (out of 5) in October to a 3.74 in March – passing our 2004 goal of 3.6. We also had scores go up in every channel and on every question. Sixty-seven percent of us are either satisfied or very satisfied with SFA as a place to work – up from 53 percent last October. This is great news, and yesterday we connected in person and across the country to celebrate our success and talk about what we've done to make SFA a great place to work.

"Our scores went up on every question and that's incredible," COO Greg Woods said. "We're setting a new example for government by involving everyone."

Since October we've all worked hard to develop plans to improve our individual employee satisfaction. Using the Gallup approach, work groups met together, reviewed their scores and decided as a team what they needed to do to get the results they wanted. Our recent score increases show we're moving in the right direction as we all take responsibility for our own satisfaction in our offices, channels and the PBO.

Top Teams
March 2001

Students
*Customer Service Call Center
*DCS – SF Hearings Branch
*DCS – SF Loan Servicing
*DCS – Atlanta Hearings Branch

CIO
*Immediate Office
*eCAD

Financial Partners
*Chicago Partner Services
*Financial Management

Schools
*Administrative Office
*Case Mgt – NY
*Case Mgt Regional Teams and Foreign Schools
*DL School Relations – Boston
*Case Mgt – Kansas
*Customer Service Call Center

Communications

Ombudsman

On the March Gallup survey, several "top teams" received very high marks and great increases in employee satisfaction (see chart). Three of these teams came forward at the All Hands meeting to share how they improved.

We heard Linda McConico talk about improving support staff morale in the Chicago Financial Partners office. The group recently held a channel off-site to encourage staff and management to start talking to and learning from each other. Financial Partners General Manager John Reeves provided support and encouragement by visiting each office and developing a sense of trust with the staff, added Merecedes Zajicek. (See the April 2001 *InStep* for more information about the channel off-site meeting.)

Jeff Raffensperger of CIO eCommerce Application Development described his team's retreat, where they created an action plan to improve information sharing. The result was a weekly meeting, or "homeroom," where the staff exchanges ideas and offers each other help based on

individual areas of expertise. Connie Davis, acting deputy CIO for eCAD, attributed their high score increase to former Deputy CIO Helene Epstein, who encouraged the work group to come together at the retreat and develop an action plan using the Gallup process.

Finally, Barbara Bolden and Shelby Stone from the Customer Service and Support Call Center team told us they came together and decided as a group what they were going to do. After picking three questions from the survey they wanted to improve, the staff set goals for themselves and developed an office action plan to work toward those goals. Supported by team manager Dena Bates, the group even created an office pledge to hang up as a constant reminder of the staff's commitment to quality performance.

Every office and channel in SFA can look at these examples for ways to improve their own employee satisfaction. Greg offered this advice to help other teams: "We can all keep getting better. Learning from these top teams can help us all improve."

Teams that needs help improving on a particular question can look on SFANet to learn from the offices that scored the highest on each of the 12 questions. Find the three top-scoring teams for each question at
http://sfanet/analysis/performance/balanced_scorecard/mar2001_employee_survey_index.html.

After teams from across SFA shared their stories of improving employee satisfaction, Greg pointed to some new initiatives that will help our scores even more. We're all familiar with one major source of frustration – our outdated computers. Greg announced that hundreds of brand new computers will replace older models in the regions in mid-July.

The D.C. staff will soon have a brand new building to help increase their satisfaction. To help make the move easier, the Amenities Team has been working to provide staff with the best resources and services. Greg recognized the Amenities Team's recent successes in securing excellent childcare options, convenient commuting methods and affordable exercise facilities for staff in the new building.

In highlighting these initiatives, Greg said we all help make SFA a great place to work. This daily commitment to high performance standards will help us set a new benchmark for government service.

"The best is yet to come," Greg said. " We can have an example, a true shining star, about what can be done in government. I'm just very, very proud to be part of this and to work with you guys."

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*The CIO's Electronic Commerce Application Development Team shares
how they scored the highest in SFA on the March 2001 Gallup employee satisfaction survey.
(Pictured left to right: Jeff Raffensperger, Bob Jamroz, Connie Davis,
Denise Merchant, Carole Kuriatnikova and Greg Woods)*

Staff in the Atlanta office attend the All Hands meeting.